

Message Text

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FOR EUR/NE - WORREL

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OGEN
SUBJECT: NOTES ON SIR ALEC DOUGLAS-HOME

REF: A. JAMES/S. WORREL TELECON ON SEPTEMBER 29

1. SIR ALEC DOUGLAS-HOME, PRIME MINISTER 1963-1964, WAS ALSO LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY UNTIL HE STEPPED DOWN IN 1965. HE BECAME FOREIGN MINISTER IN THE HEATH GOVERNMENT 1970-1974, AND RESUMED HIS SEAT IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS IN 1974 WHEN HE WITHDREW AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE OCTOBER ELECTION. HE IS CONSIDERED BY SOME CONSERVATIVES AS "ELDER STATESMAN" OF THE PARTY, PERHAPS A BERNARD BARUCH FIGURE, BUT IS INCREASINGLY INACTIVE IN PARTY AFFAIRS.

2. SIR ALEC PARTICIPIN CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY IN BOTH ELECTIONS IN 1974 AND, TO A MORE LIMITED EXTENT, IN THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN. HE STILL COMMANDS A HIGH RESPECT FROM CONSERVATIVE PARTY MEMBERS, THOUGH HIS ACTIVITIES ARE SOMEWHAT CURTAILED. HE EARLIER AVOIDED PUBLICLY TAKING REFUGE IN WRITING HIS MEMOIRS, THOUGH HE PERHAPS WILL NOW PRESS ON TOWARD THIS TASK. HE IS 72 YEARS OLD.

3. SIR ALEC RE-EMERGED AS A FIGURE OF INTEREST TO THE MEDIA IN THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE EARLIER THIS YEAR. HE WAS THEN COMMENDED FOR THE
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GENTILITY AND GRACE WITH WHICH HE DEPARTED FROM THE

LEADERSHIP ROLE. SIR ALEC WAS CREDITED WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CREATING A SYSTEM WHEREBY THE LEADER OF THE PARTY WOULD BE ELECTED RATHER THAN SIMPLY "EMERGE" ON THE BASIS OF CONSULTATION. THIS SYSTEM, WITH SUBSEQUENT CHANGES, WAS THAT WHICH THE PARTY FOLLOWED IN EARLY 1974 IN EFFECT DISELECTING HEATH AND ELECTING MARGARET THATCHER.
RICHARDSON

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